

Doctor Wilke's Phony Figures

In the *Life Issues Connector* of October 2008, in an article titled: *Which President Decreased Abortions ?*, Dr. John Wilke states that the apparent reduction in the number of abortions from 1991 to the present is due to the state laws passed after the 1992 *Casey* decision, especially *Parental Notification* and *Parental Consent*. But he neglects to present state by state figures which would validate his claim by showing that states which passed such laws had reductions in the number of abortions while the other states did not.

In fact, states which did not pass such laws show the same statistical drop as those which did. California, Oregon and Washington all had substantial decreases, according to the Guttmacher figures upon which Wilke relies, in the absence of laws mandating parental involvement. California showed a 39 % drop, Oregon had a 29 % drop and Washington had a 37 % drop. Montana, which has no effective parental involvement law, [*] showed a 44 % decrease from 1991 to 2005 which is comparable to the 37 % decrease in Colorado, which does have a parental notification law. Vermont showed a 49 % drop despite the absence of abortion restrictions mandating parental involvement. Hawaii showed a 53 % drop from a very high rate of 46.2 abortions per 1000 women in 1991, despite having passed no restrictions. Two states without restrictions, Maryland and New Jersey, showed increases in the number of abortions. But you can't cite those states as proving something, while ignoring states which show the opposite. [* Montana did pass such a law but the *Enforcement* is *permanently enjoined by court order*, as has happened in several other states.]

Of course these abortion figures are not very reliable. They depend upon the willingness of abortion providers to voluntarily provide accurate information to the Alan Guttmacher Institute which solicits them by mail and by phone. Truthfulness is not a characteristic of abortion providers. And there are all sorts of factors which may throw off these figures. The very low statistical rate of abortion in Wyoming is almost certainly due to the absence of abortion providers in Casper and Cheyenne, the two largest cities. The abortuaries of Colorado are within easy driving distance and I know from experience that many Wyoming abortion customers come to Colorado. And there are similar factors in other places.

It is arguable that any restriction upon abortion can have some deterrent effect. But there is no showing that any of these restrictions are reliably enforced. It has been well documented that the abortion industry routinely avoids cooperating with laws that require them to report pregnant teens as possible cases of statutory rape. Nominal and toothless restrictions upon abortion are not likely to have any effect. Except to justify the fund raising of the organizations that support them. And, to pass these restrictions, the supporters effectively abandon the moral argument against abortion.

Doctor John Wilke's specious claims in respect to *parental involvement* laws and the benefits of the 1992 *Casey* decision are characteristic of the political pro life movement generally. Wilke has a long history of refusing to support Sidewalk Counselling and Rescues while he promotes these marginal measures. Which must be tailored to fit within the legal parameters of the *Casey* decision. It allowed *reasonable restrictions* on abortion so long as they do not *substantially interfere* with *the right of abortion*. In short, the *Casey* decision set *the right of abortion* into legal cement. It marked the failure of the political pro life organizations like Wilke's outfit and National Right to Life, which he once headed. They continue to peddle the illusion that *Casey* represented some sort of victory. The major part of what pretends to be a pro life movement remains trapped in these self-serving deceptions. Getting rid of that false faith is the necessary first step in the direction of an effective anti abortion movement. *Terry Sullivan* January 2009